



General Assembly

January Session, 2005

Committee Bill No. 897

LCO No. 4423

04423SB00897KID

Referred to Committee on Select Committee on Children

Introduced by:
(KID)

**AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CHILD
POVERTY COUNCIL.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General
Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 4-67x of the general statutes is repealed and the
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

3 (a) There shall be a Child Poverty Council consisting of the
4 following members or their designees: The Secretary of the Office of
5 Policy and Management, the president pro tempore of the Senate, the
6 speaker of the House of Representatives, the minority leader of the
7 Senate and the minority leader of the House of Representatives, the
8 Commissioners of Children and Families, Social Services, Correction,
9 Mental Retardation, Mental Health and Addiction Services,
10 Transportation, Public Health, Education, Economic and Community
11 Development and Health Care Access, the Labor Commissioner, the
12 Chairman of the Board of Governors for Higher Education, the Child
13 Advocate, the chairperson of the State Prevention Council, the
14 chairperson of the Children's Trust Fund and the executive director of
15 the Commission on Children. The Secretary of the Office of Policy and
16 Management or the secretary's designee shall be the chairperson. The

17 council shall develop a ten-year plan, to begin June 8, 2004, to reduce
18 the number of children living in poverty in the state by fifty per cent.

19 (b) The plan shall contain: (1) An identification and analysis of the
20 occurrence of child poverty in the state, (2) an analysis of the long-term
21 effects of child poverty on children, their families and their
22 communities, (3) an analysis of costs of child poverty to municipalities
23 and the state, (4) an inventory of state-wide public and private
24 programs that address child poverty, (5) the percentage of the target
25 population served by such programs and the current state funding
26 levels, if any, for such programs, (6) an identification and analysis of
27 any deficiencies or inefficiencies of such programs, and (7) procedures
28 and priorities for implementing strategies to achieve a fifty per cent
29 reduction in child poverty in the state by June 30, 2014. Such
30 procedures and priorities shall include, but not be limited to, (A)
31 vocational training and placement to promote career progression, for
32 parents of children living in poverty, (B) educational opportunities,
33 including higher education opportunities, and advancement for such
34 parents and children including, but not limited to, preliteracy, literacy
35 and family literacy programs, (C) housing for such parents and
36 children, (D) day care and after-school programs and mentoring
37 programs for such children and for single parents, (E) health care
38 access for such parents and children including access to mental health
39 services and family planning, (F) treatment programs and services,
40 including substance abuse programs and services, for such parents and
41 children, and (G) accessible childhood nutrition programs.

42 (c) In developing the plan, the council shall consult with experts and
43 providers of services to children living in poverty and parents of such
44 children. The council shall hold at least one public hearing on the plan.
45 After the public hearing, the council may make any modifications that
46 the members deem necessary based on testimony given at the public
47 hearing.

48 (d) Funds from private and public sources may be accepted and

49 utilized by the council to develop and implement the plan and
50 provisions of this section.

51 (e) Not later than January 1, 2005, the council shall submit the plan,
52 in accordance with section 11-4a, to the joint standing committees
53 having cognizance of matters relating to appropriations and human
54 services and to the select committee having cognizance of matters
55 relating to children, along with any recommendations for legislation
56 and funding necessary to implement the plan.

57 (f) On or before January 1, 2006, and annually thereafter, until
58 January 1, 2015, the council shall report, in accordance with section 11-
59 4a, to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having
60 cognizance of matters relating to appropriations and human services
61 and to the select committee having cognizance of matters relating to
62 children on the implementation of the plan and the extent to which
63 state actions are in conformity with the plan.

64 (g) Not later than January 1, 2006, the Secretary of the Office of
65 Policy and Management shall: (1) Establish administrative procedures,
66 through memoranda of agreement, coordination of services or other
67 means, to improve access by eligible children and families to services
68 that diminish poverty or negative outcomes related to poverty, (2)
69 require that state contracts related to services for low-income children
70 and families include performance-based standards and outcome
71 measures related to the child poverty reduction goal specified in
72 subsection (a) of this section, (3) establish a common protocol among
73 state agencies for a standard assessment concerning barriers to
74 employment, including transportation, child care, education and
75 substance abuse issues, to expedite referrals and access to services, and
76 (4) within available appropriations, increase outreach and education to
77 low-income families regarding available services and resources.

78 [(g)] (h) For purposes of this section, the Secretary of the Office of
79 Policy and Management, or the secretary's designee, shall be
80 responsible for coordinating all necessary activities, including, but not

81 limited to, scheduling and presiding over meetings and public
82 hearings.

83 [(h)] (i) The council shall terminate on June 30, 2015.

84 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) The Secretary of the Office of
85 Policy and Management shall direct state agencies with representatives
86 appointed to the Child Poverty Council pursuant to subsection (a) of
87 section 4-67x of the general statutes, as amended by this act, to (1)
88 prioritize and redesign departmental missions to include the reduction
89 or elimination of child poverty as a goal, and (2) realign departmental
90 resources to reduce child poverty for families served by such
91 departments by ten per cent in the budget years beginning July 1, 2006
92 to July 1, 2013, inclusive.

93 Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2005*) (a) The Labor Department shall
94 implement a program to enhance the employability of participants in
95 the Jobs First program administered by the Commissioner of Social
96 Services and the temporary family assistance program. The Labor
97 Commissioner shall implement the program in conjunction with the
98 design team for the Jobs First program. For purposes of section 4-67x
99 of the general statutes, as amended by this act, and sections 2 to 4,
100 inclusive, of this act, the "Jobs First program" shall mean the
101 demonstration program entitled "Reach For Jobs First" pursuant to
102 Section 1115 of the Social Security Act. For purposes of the program,
103 the department, within available appropriations, shall provide or
104 award grants to providers for:

105 (1) Supplemental assessments of Jobs First program participants and
106 other recipients of temporary family assistance who lack a high school
107 diploma, or the equivalent, or who are identified as having
108 mathematics or reading skills which are a barrier to employment at
109 wages which enable the participant and the participant's family to be
110 self-sufficient. These assessments shall be designed to determine
111 effective education, training or other action to mitigate identified
112 barriers to employment;

113 (2) Education in basic skills necessary for employment, including,
114 but not limited to, English as a second language, literacy and
115 numeracy programs, and high school completion and general
116 education development programs, for the Jobs First program
117 participants and other temporary family assistance recipients
118 identified as needing such education to obtain employment at wages
119 which enable the participant and the participant's family to be self-
120 sufficient. Such basic skills programs shall combine education, training
121 and work-related experience so that participants meet the federal
122 temporary assistance for needy families participation requirements; or

123 (3) Vocational education programs that integrate basic skills
124 education for the Jobs First program participants and other temporary
125 family assistance recipients identified as needing such education to
126 obtain employment at wages that enable the participant and the
127 participant's family to be self-sufficient.

128 (b) Basic skills programs shall (1) provide a minimum of ten hours
129 of education or training per week, and (2) be available throughout the
130 year and at times of the day when Jobs First program participants are
131 available to participate.

132 (c) In awarding grants for the purposes of the program, the
133 department shall give preference to innovative models of adult
134 learning in the context of employment.

135 Sec. 4. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2005*) (a) On and after October 1, 2005,
136 basic skills education shall not be included in the employment plan of
137 any new Jobs First program or temporary family assistance participant
138 until a supplemental assessment, as described in subdivision (1) of
139 subsection (a) of section 3 of this act, is completed.

140 (b) Not later than July 1, 2006, a supplemental assessment, as
141 described in subdivision (1) of section 3 of this act, shall be performed
142 for participants in the Jobs First program and other recipients of
143 temporary family assistance who lack a high school diploma, or the

144 equivalent, or who are identified as having mathematics or reading
145 skills which are a barrier to employment prior to July 1, 2005.

146 (c) On and after October 1, 2005, basic skills education shall not be
147 included in the employment plan of any Jobs First participant unless
148 the supplemental assessment indicates that such education will
149 mitigate identified barriers to employment faced by such participant.

150 Sec. 5. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2005*) (a) Programs to develop basic
151 skills, as described in subdivision (2) of subsection (a) of section 3 of
152 this act, and vocational education programs shall report every six
153 months to the regional workforce development boards established
154 pursuant to section 31-3k of the general statutes, on the number of Jobs
155 First program participants who participated in basic skills training and
156 vocational education programs and attained employment during or
157 after completing the training or programs, the kind of employment
158 and pay level of the employment and the length of time that the Jobs
159 First program participant retained employment.

160 (b) Each regional workforce development board shall report
161 annually to the Labor Department and the local temporary assistance
162 for needy families council on the number of Jobs First program
163 participants in its region who participated in basic skills training and
164 vocational education programs and the number who attained
165 employment during or after completing the training or programs, the
166 kind of employment and pay level of the employment and the number
167 of participants who retained employment for three months and for six
168 months.

169 Sec. 6. Subsection (c) of section 17b-112 of the general statutes is
170 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*
171 *1, 2005*):

172 (c) A family who is subject to time-limited benefits may petition the
173 Commissioner of Social Services for six-month extensions of such
174 benefits. The commissioner shall grant not more than two extensions to

175 such family who has made a good faith effort to comply with the
176 requirements of the program and despite such effort has a total family
177 income at a level below the payment standard, or has encountered
178 circumstances preventing employment including, but not limited to:
179 (1) Domestic violence or physical harm to such family's children; or (2)
180 other circumstances beyond such family's control. The commissioner
181 shall disregard ninety dollars of earned income in determining
182 applicable family income. The commissioner may grant a subsequent
183 six-month extension if each adult in the family meets one or more of
184 the following criteria: (A) The adult is precluded from engaging in
185 employment activities due to domestic violence or another reason
186 beyond the adult's control; (B) the adult has two or more substantiated
187 barriers to employment including, but not limited to, the lack of
188 available child care, substance abuse or addiction, severe mental or
189 physical health problems, one or more severe learning disabilities,
190 domestic violence or a child who has a serious physical or behavioral
191 health problem; (C) the adult is working thirty-five or more hours per
192 week, is earning at least the minimum wage and continues to earn less
193 than the family's temporary family assistance payment standard; [or]
194 (D) the adult is employed and works less than thirty-five hours per
195 week due to (i) a documented medical impairment that limits the
196 adult's hours of employment, provided the adult works the maximum
197 number of hours that the medical condition permits, or (ii) the need to
198 care for a disabled member of the adult's household, provided the
199 adult works the maximum number of hours the adult's caregiving
200 responsibilities permit. Families receiving temporary family assistance
201 shall be notified by the department of the right to petition for such
202 extensions; or (E) the adult is actively engaged in basic skills training
203 included in an approved employment plan for the Jobs First program,
204 which training is expected to be completed not later than six months
205 from the beginning of such training. Notwithstanding the provisions
206 of this section, the commissioner shall not provide benefits under the
207 state's temporary family assistance program to a family that is subject
208 to the twenty-one month benefit limit and has received benefits

209 beginning on or after October 1, 1996, if such benefits result in that
 210 family's receiving more than sixty months of time-limited benefits
 211 unless that family experiences domestic violence, as defined in Section
 212 402(a)(7)(B), P.L. 104-193. For the purpose of calculating said sixty-
 213 month limit: (I) A month shall count toward the limit if the family
 214 receives assistance for any day of the month, and (II) a month in which
 215 a family receives temporary assistance for needy families benefits that
 216 are issued from a jurisdiction other than Connecticut shall count
 217 toward the limit.

218 Sec. 7. (*Effective July 1, 2005*) The sum of eighteen million dollars is
 219 appropriated to the Labor Department, from the General Fund, for the
 220 fiscal year ending June 30, 2006, for the purposes of carrying out the
 221 provisions of sections 2 to 4, inclusive, of this act.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	4-67x
Sec. 2	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 3	<i>July 1, 2005</i>	New section
Sec. 4	<i>July 1, 2005</i>	New section
Sec. 5	<i>July 1, 2005</i>	New section
Sec. 6	<i>July 1, 2005</i>	17b-112(c)
Sec. 7	<i>July 1, 2005</i>	New section

Statement of Purpose:

To reduce the number of children living in poverty in the state.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]

Co-Sponsors: SEN. HANDLEY, 4th Dist.; REP. THOMPSON, 13th Dist.
 REP. MUSHINSKY, 85th Dist.; REP. TRUGLIA, 145th Dist.

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